GINSBURG PHOENIX FELLOWS

2024-2025 Cohort

Evaluation Summary Report

RISING TOGETHER
PHOENIX
GENERATION

THE PHOENIX GENERATION MOVEMENT

GINSBURG PHOENIX FELLOWS

The Ginsburg Phoenix Fellows is an incubator of passionate young students from across Central Florida. The fellowship allows students to learn, implement, and share the tools needed to create the community they wish for. Participants are students ready to step up and take charge of issues affecting their communities. The Ginsburg Phoenix Fellows created programs throughout the school year to spark conversations around civic engagement, curious disagreement, positive activism, and bias reduction in their communities and campuses. Along with the programs, the fellows promoted the Central Florida Pledge, a first-of-its-kind network of "community first responders," everyday people who want to bring communities together and protect one another.

This **2024-2025** academic year, the Fellows hosted 44 impactful campus events. For each of the schools, the students developed, organized, and executed their own programs, receiving funds from the Ginsburg Family Foundation to fuel their initiatives.

As a hub for leadership development and community-driven change, the program provides fellows with academic scholarships, funding for campus and community initiatives, mentorship, networking opportunities, and educational resources. The fellows collaborate on programming and advocacy efforts that bring the **Central Florida Pledge** to life and play an integral role in organizing the **Phoenix Generation Annual Conference**.

OUR PILLARS:

Youth Leadership | Developing Visionary Thinking and Creative Expression
Educational Empowerment | Fostering Curiosity and Dialogue in a Diverse Democracy
Inclusivity | Creating spaces where diverse voices are welcomed and celebrated as a source of strength
Positive Activism | Practicing Civic and Community Engagement
Community Collaboration | Working hand-in-hand with local leaders, organizations, and peers to build lasting connections and impact

OVER
40

events hosted in the school year 2024-2025

From Central Florida
6

Different schools provided fellows

A total of
13

Fellows participated in the program

THE CENTRAL FLORIDA PLEDGE

The Pledge asks residents to treat all people with kindness and respect, especially those with whom they disagree, and to respond to and support those experiencing threatening incidents. Our mission is to build a culture where every individual feels valued, respected, and protected, regardless of their faith, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, beliefs, or identity.

I WILL *lead by example, treating all people, especially those with whom I disagree, with kindness and respect*
I WILL *refrain from inflammatory words and actions, and actively support those being attacked*

I WILL *report threatening incidents of hate and violence to 800-423-TIPS (8477)*

I WILL *educate myself about antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, homophobia, and all other forms of discrimination, and help others in my circle of influence to do the same*

DEMOGRAPHICS

Fellows Sex Breakdown

61.54% Female

38.46% Male

Meet the fellows:

Ambika Chottani, Vrajesh Patel, and Cyris Lim – Dr. Phillips High School
Solange Ruiz – Full Sail University
Joseph Pool and Lexi Cohen – Rollins College
Waniya Hussain and Derrick Doh – Stetson University
Akhila Damarla, Ashly Rodriguez Reyes, and Cyril P. Robertson – University of Central Florida (UCF)
Angela Torres (Fall 2024), Nicolle Nobre (Spring 2025)– Valencia College

College/School Student Fellows Count	
3	Dr. Phillips High School
3	University of Central Florida (UCF)
2	Stetson University
2	Rollins College
2	Valencia College
1	Full Sail University

COMMUNITY IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, the Ginsburg Phoenix Fellows hosted approximately **44 events**, reaching more than **3,800 individuals**—including students, faculty, staff, and community members across Central Florida.

Each participating school crafted a unique curriculum tailored to the needs and interests of its local community. Event themes ranged from youth engagement, conflict resolution, and civil discourse to creative and lighthearted activities that brought people together. Several programs served as **incubators for the Central Florida Pledge**, gathering hundreds of signatories at events such as the **UCF vs. Arizona Tailgate** and **It Starts with Us** at Dr. Phillips High School.

At Dr. Phillips High School, Fellows **Ambika Chottani**, **Vrajesh Patel**, and **Cyris Lim** led powerful initiatives that resonated with their peers and served as a model for youth-led impact within a high school setting. As one example, they grew the Holocaust Walk event to more purposefully include student athletes and student musicians so that more students could learn about this important topic, and to reduce siloed student cliques on campus.

Other programs encouraged communities to connect through shared interests. At **Valencia College**, Ginsburg Fellow **Nicolle Nobre** founded the **Book Nerds Club**, a student-led organization that explored literature's deeper meaning and societal influence. With the support of the fellowship, the Book Nerds became a registered student organization.

At **Rollins College**, the fellowship supported the growth of **Breaking Bread**, the first organization of its kind on campus, dedicated to fostering interfaith dialogue and difficult conversations in a welcoming space. Founded by **Joseph Pool** and supported by **Lexi Cohen**, Vice-Chair of Hillel, Breaking Bread co-hosted interfaith events such as **Mimouna**, a cultural celebration developed in partnership with Hillel, the Muslim Student Association, and the broader campus community to explore Moroccan-Jewish traditions.

At the **University of Central Florida**, fellow **Ashly Rodriguez Reyes**, in collaboration with UCF Student Government, founded the **Interfaith Council**—an initiative designed to foster understanding, cooperation, and connection among faith-based student organizations. The inaugural council meeting included representatives from the Muslim Student Association, Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM), Chabad Jewish Student Group, Cru, UCF Hillel, and the Indian Student Association, along with UCF's Vice President of Student Government, Diversity and Inclusion Specialist **Jasmine Kaur**, and other student leaders.

Dr. Phillips High School was recognized with the **Educational Partner Award** and Joseph Pool with the **Youth Award** at the annual Central Florida Pledge celebration. Several of these returning students are launching fellowship prototypes at their new institutions, expanding the reach of the Ginsburg Phoenix vision beyond its original campus.

These highlights reflect the fellowship's mission to create lasting, student-driven change through meaningful civic and cultural programming.

Resources and information related to the Phoenix Movement

Community Impact Report

Phoenix Generation: The Rise of a New Era

Bridging Divides: Shira Hoffer on Dialogue, Disagreement & Understanding - YouTube

LEGACY AND CONTINUED IMPACT

The success of the 2024–2025 cohort has already paved the way for lasting influence. Several fellows have returned for the **2025–2026 cohort**, continuing to expand their impact:

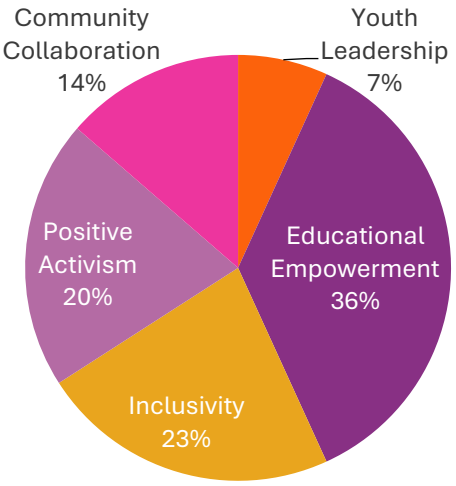
- **Vrajesh Patel**, previously a Fellow at Dr. Phillips High School, rejoined the program as a student at the **University of Florida**.
- **Ambika Chottani**, now enrolled in the **BS/MD program at University of South Florida**, also returned to the fellowship.
- **Joseph Pool** continues to lead initiatives at **Rollins College**, building on the foundation he helped establish.
- **Waniya Hussain** continues the initiative at **Stetson University.**
- **Solange Ruiz,** returned from **Full Sail University**.
- **Nicolle Nobre,** a **Valencia College** student returning for the 2025-2026 cohort.

Together, these returning students are **launching fellowship prototypes at their new institutions**, expanding the reach of the Ginsburg Phoenix vision beyond its original campus.

The 2025–2026 Ginsburg Phoenix Fellow cohort will include about **30 promising high school and college students** from Central Florida. These young leaders are continuing the movement, driving change on their campuses and in their communities—each contributing to the creation of the inclusive, empowered future they envision.

ACADEMIC YEAR EVENTS

Based on our pillars



CONTINUING TO RISE TOGETHER

The Ginsburg Phoenix Fellowship continues to empower young leaders across Central Florida and beyond, cultivating a culture of civic engagement, critical dialogue, and creative community building.

As the Ginsburg Phoenix Fellowship grows, so does its reach—empowering a new generation of civic-minded leaders to rise, question, connect, and create. In Summer 2025 we launched our internship program, and we aim for a conference with up to 1000 students in 2026! The seeds planted by this cohort are already taking root across Florida, and the journey has only just begun.

SPONSORS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS